(c) whether Government is considering their demands; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Agriculture has not received such an information.

(c) and (d) Questions do not arise.

Sowing of wheat and other foodgrains

†806. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that sowing of wheat and other foodgrains in the rabi crop during current year has been less as compared to earlier years;

(b) if so, the area in which wheat, paddy, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane and cotton have been sown respectively;

(c) how much it is less as compared to earlier years' sowing in each case; and

(d) the means Government has decided to adopt to meet the shortfall in production as a result of less sowing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Table below presents the area coverage under wheat, paddy, coarse cereals and pulses during Rabi 2008 *vis-a-vis* those during Rabi 2007 and Rabi 2006:

(*Lakh hectares*)

Crop	Rabi 2008	Rabi 2007	Rabi 2006
Wheat	271.99	279.95	264.84
Paddy	40.93	42.12	43.25
Coarse Cereals	58.28	63.14	63.64
Pulses	116.10	125.16	117.12

(b) and (c) Table below presents the areas coverage (both Kharif and Rabi seasons) under wheat, paddy, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane and cotton during the years 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 alongwith their differences:

(*Lakh hectares*)

Crop	Areas Coverage			Difference	
1	2	3	4	5=(Col.2-Col.3)	6=Col.2-Col.4)
	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06		
Wheat	271.99	279.95	264.84	-7.96	7.15
Paddy	437.01	438.14	436.60	-1.13	0.41
Oilseeds	268.42	265.13	278.63	3.29	-10.21

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Pulses	231.97	231.92	223.91	0.05	8.06
Sugarcane	49.27	51.51	42.02	-2.24	7.25
Cotton	95.60	91.45	86.77	4.15	8.83

(d) As per the 2nd Advance Estimates of Production released on 7th February, 2008, production of paddy, oilseeds, pulses and cotton are higher during 2007-08 as compared to 2006-07 whereas production of wheat and sugarcane are lower. Government imported 6.08 million tonnes of wheat to augment the buffer stock during 2006-07.

Prevention of bird flu

807. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that main causes for spread of bird flu in West Bengal and other States could not be located well in time by the Central Government;

(b) if so, the total number of hens, cocks and chickens lost their lives due to this disease;

(c) whether this bird flu is only for the poultry and no other birds suffer this disease; and

(d) what preventive steps taken/being taken by Central Government to prevent such diseases in future which may also harm human being?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No, Sir. However, the present occurrence of bird flu is limited only to West Bengal and has not been reported from any other State in the country.

(b) A total of 40 lakh poultry birds have been culled up to 03.03.2008 in West Bengal as part of the control and containment operations against bird flu in the State. Further, another 3.03 lakh poultry birds have been culled as part of preventive culling undertaken in the border areas of Assam, Bihar and Jharkhand and West Bengal.

(c) Bird flu can, in addition to poultry, also affect wild/migratory birds.

(d) The Government of India has drawn up an 'Action Plan of Animal Husbandry for Preparednes, Control and Containment of Avian Influenza' and circulated the same to all States/Union Territories for compliance. The preventive steps against future occurrence of such diseases include maintaining strict surveillance, prompt reporting of any unusual mortality of livestock and birds, drawing regular samples, capacity building in laboratory diagnostic facilities, strengthening of animal quarantine stations and creating overall awareness on bio-security in livestock production system.

Ban on the sale of agricultural land

808. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken a final decision to ban on the sale of agricultural land in the country for setting up of industries thereon;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when it is expected to be implemented and if not, the reasons for reducing the agricultural land rapidly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. As per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, land is